

REMARKS

Claims 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, and 37 are pending in the application. Claims 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, and 37 stand rejected. Claims 25, 33, and 35 are hereby amended. Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the following remarks and allowance of the claims.

Response to Arguments

The Examiner appears to have failed to fully understand all the elements of the claimed invention. For example, the Examiner's characterization of the prior art fails to disclose the prepaid account code as associated with a second access provider as required by the claims. Advantageously, the claimed invention provides for prepaid Internet access for a user from a *first access provider* when the user has obtained the access rights from a *second access provider*. The Examiner's characterization of the cited prior art (CPA) appears to neglect the important limitation of a second access provider.

Namely, the Examiner's Response to Arguments characterizes the CPA as teaching and describing *a method that provides a PIN number, or access code to the user, which entitles the user to log on to an Internet entry server* (page 5, second last paragraph of June 14th, 2004 Office Action). The Response further states that *CPA provides (pre) paid service connect time allotment to user after authenticating user*. However, such a characterization of the prior art, while accurate, does not include several limitations of the claimed invention, such as the second access provider.

Claim Rejections Based Upon 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 25 and 33 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the art that the inventor had possession of the claimed invention at the time the application was filed. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider his rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 in view of the citations provided below. The following citations indicate where the specification supports the claims. However, support for the claims is not limited to only the citations provided.

The specification at page 14, line 5 to page 16, line 27 provides support for the claims. In addition, the specification at page 35, line 3 to page 37, line 2 supports the claims. On page 16,

lines 13-27 of applicant's Specification, a typical access provider is defined as comprising an access server, a firewall/router, and a local database system. Access server 524, firewall/router 526, and local database system 570 are connected and comprise a first access provider. Local database system 590, firewall router 556, and access server 554 comprise a second access provider. Distinguished from the prior art, central database system 580 links the two local database systems of the first and second access providers.

Thus, the first access provider of claim 25 is associated with the local database system and the access server. The second access provider of claim 25 is associated with the foreign database system. FIG. 5 illustrates the first access provider's access server 524 linked to central database system 522. FIG. 6 illustrates central database system 522 as including local database system 570, central database system 580, and local database system 590. On page 36 of applicant's Specification, central database system 522 identifies local database system 590 based on *foreign network account information*. Local database system 590 is therefore distinguished in claim 25 from local database system 570 as a *foreign* database system. Claim 33 is supported by the same citations as those provided in support of claim 25.

Claim Rejections Based Upon 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

Claims 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, and 37 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,749,075 (Toader et al.). Toader does not anticipate claims 25, 27, 29, 33, 35, and 37 for the following reasons.

Amended claim 25 now recites identifying a foreign database system of a second access provider based on the prepaid account code. Toader does not disclose identifying a foreign database system of a second access provider based on a prepaid account code.

Amended independent claim 25 also now recites transferring the prepaid account code to the foreign database system of the second access provider if the prepaid account code is not known in the local database system of a first access provider. A central database system interfaces with the local database system and the foreign database system. Claim 25 further recites in the foreign database system, processing the prepaid account code to determine if the prepaid account code is known, and providing internet access to the network device through the access server of the first access provider if the prepaid account code is known in the foreign database system. Claim 25 advantageously allows multiple access providers to enter into sharing

agreements with other access providers. Internet users are provided greater mobility and availability as a result of these sharing agreements (Specification, page 35, lines 8-13).

Toader does not disclose providing internet access through an access server of a first access provider if a prepaid account code is known in a foreign database system of a second access provider. Applicant acknowledges that Toader presents a prepaid Internet access system wherein a user gains access to the Internet using a prepaid account code (Toader, col. 5, lines 30-35: "the PIN number can be used either for computer access...."). However, Toader does not disclose the PIN as known in a foreign database of a second access provider as require by claim 25.

In fact, Toader teaches a system similar to the prior art described in the specification. The specification describes prior art systems as including access providers authenticating users using their own databases (Specification, page 35, line 4). Similarly, Toader discloses an access provider that authenticates users using its own database system. Specifically, Toader first gathers biographical information from a user when the user first dials an enhanced entry server (EES) in response to a commercial offer such as a rebate offer (Toader, col. 5 lines 39-55). The EES stores the user's information in association with a PIN. Later, the user installs Internet access software on a computer. The software directs the computer to connect to the EES. The EES provides Internet access to the user through the connection to the user's computer after validating the user and the PIN. Thus, Toader discloses a single database system (the EES) that authenticates users for a single access provider (the entity that operates the EES).

Toader does disclose the EES as providing access to a user by charging the user's credit card (Toader, col. 3, lines 45-55), which requires the EES to interface with a credit card service. It appears that the Examiner equates a credit card service as an access server. However, a credit card service is not an access provider, and one skilled in the art would not consider a credit card service to be an access provider. Furthermore, as discussed above, applicant's Specification would not lead one skilled in the art to equate an access provider as described in claim 25 with a credit card service.

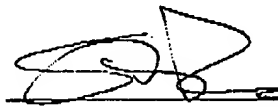
Independent claim 33 contains similar limitations as claim 25 and is therefore allowable over the art of record. Dependent claims 27, 29, 35, and 37 contain limitations that render them separately allowable over the prior art. However, a discussion is unnecessary because the dependent claims depend from allowable independent claims.

CONCLUSION

The claims in their present form are allowable over the art of record. Applicant therefore solicits their allowance. A one month extension of time is requested and authorized with the transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

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